



Town of Westport
Planning and Zoning Commission
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July 29, 2020

OUTDOOR FITNESS FAQ's

PROCESS

1. What's the process for seeking approval for an outdoor fitness studio?

You will need to complete the Town of Westport Temporary Permit Application/Certification for Outdoor Fitness Studio Operation and supply evidence that you have obtained the State's COVID-19 self-certification from DECD. Please complete the Application/Self-Certification Form included as Exhibit A to §32-28 of the Westport Zoning Regulations which you can find on the town website at this link (visit <https://www.westportct.gov/home/showdocument?id=30491>)

2. Do I need to hire an architect or engineer?

There is no need to hire any outside consultants. The self-certification form is very simple and you can use a drawing made by hand, old plans or even a printout from Google Maps and show the area roughly to scale to indicate where you would like to locate your outdoor studio.

3. What's the timeline before I can start?

The regulation goes into effect on August 1, 2020. The timeline is based on the availability of the Fire Marshal to inspect. Contact the Fire Marshal at FMO@westportct.gov. Generally, he can respond within one to three days with his approval.

4. Will the regulation allowing temporary Outdoor Studios expire?

Yes, the adopted regulation expires on March 31, 2021.

OUTDOOR FITNESS STUDIO GUIDELINES

1. What businesses can open an outdoor studio?

Any existing Westport fitness business can utilize these new rules to open an outdoor fitness studio area, even though this wasn't permitted in the past.

2. Where can I put the outdoor studio area?

The outdoor studio can be located anywhere outdoors on your lot, with prior approval of your landlord. This means it can potentially go in your parking lot. It can even potentially be located within the side and rear setbacks as long as you are sensitive to neighboring uses, especially any residential uses adjacent or nearby. **Clear and obvious visual barriers must be used to demarcate any outdoor fitness area operating within a parking lot.**

3. What are the permitted hours?

The permitted hours are 5am – 8pm.

4. Are there restrictions on amplified music and sound?

All cycling, Zumba and cardio dance classes are required to use soundless headphone technology when operating outdoors. All fitness studios are expected to act as good neighbors and to mitigate amplified sound and commands to be sensitive to their neighbors, especially early mornings and on weekends. Noise complaints will be referred to the Westport Police Department for enforcement action.

5. If I put the outdoor studio in my parking lot, where will people park?

If you intend to use part or all of your parking lot for an outdoor studio, you should ensure there is parking nearby for both patrons and your employees with signage informing folks where to park and permission from neighboring property owners.

6. Can I create a combined outdoor studio area with some other fitness studios in my same building or area?

Yes. Please feel free to collaborate on a plan with your neighboring studios. The temporary regulation requires an outdoor studio must be located on the same site as the fitness business.

7. May I add a tent or other structure to cover the outdoor studio?

Yes. Please note that all tents must strictly comply with any local building and fire code requirements.

SPECIAL CONSIDERATIONS/COVID-19

1. Do I need any state approvals to open?

Yes. You must self-certify with the State before opening. Here is the link for the application: https://service.ct.gov/recovery/s/?language=en_US

2. How big of an outdoor studio area am I permitted to create? Is it the physical size of the area or occupancy that matters or both?

The size of the space is at your discretion as long as (i) you receive the landlord's approval and (ii) you are in strict compliance with all state and local COVID-19 health requirements in terms of separation of mats, bikes or areas for each client.

3. Can patrons utilize the bathrooms inside my studio?

Yes. However, they must put their mask on before entering. Management should keep in mind there is a requirement to install visual social distancing markers to encourage clients to remain 6 ft apart (e.g., the entrance to the studio, lines to make payments, lines to use the restroom).

4. Are patrons required to wear masks when they exercise outside?

Masks should be worn while entering and/or leaving the facility, or leaving the outdoor area to use the restroom. Gyms, sports clubs, and fitness centers that do not provide organized sports shall operate at 50% capacity. Establishments that require customers to wear a mask while exercising must maintain 6 ft of space between equipment/people. Establishments that do not require customers to wear a mask while exercising must maintain 12 ft of space between equipment/people. For non-vigorous exercises participants can maintain 6 ft of distance while not wearing a mask.

5. Where should hand washing or sanitizing stations be set up? What should be provided?

Hand sanitizer shall be made available at entrance points and common areas.

6. How frequently must the bathrooms be sanitized and is there a recommended sanitizing solution or product?

Bathrooms should be cleaned frequently, implementing use of a cleaning log for tracking.

Sanitizing solutions and/or products need to follow federal guidelines (CDC, EPA) on what specific products to use and how:

- Use products that meet EPA's criteria for use against SARS-CoV-2 and that are appropriate for the surface. Prior to wiping the surface, allow the disinfectant to sit for the necessary contact time recommended by the manufacturer. Train staff on proper cleaning procedures to ensure safe and correct application of disinfectants.
- Disinfectants are irritants and sensitizers, and they should be used cautiously.
- Avoid all food contact surfaces when using disinfectants; these surfaces should be sanitized instead.
- Clean and disinfect common areas, high transit areas, and frequently touched surfaces on an ongoing basis (at least daily) and more frequently if used more often. Clean and disinfect shared objects after each use including but not limited to: (i) entrances and exits, (ii) payment devices (e.g., PIN pad) and (iii) chairs.

You can find more details regarding the Governor's Re-Open Connecticut standards here: https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/DECD/Covid_Business_Recovery-Phase-2/0723Sports_FitnessCenters-C2_V5.pdf